

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3613

SECDEF WASHDC

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AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

CINCUSNAVEUR

EUCOM

CINCUSAFE

CINCUSAREUR

USDOCOSOUTH

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY/EC J-2

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SUBJECT: TURKISH-GREEK RELATIONS: GOT CALM, PRESS PLAY DECLINES
SLIGHTLY

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SUMMARY: GOT CONTINUES CALM STAND IN FACE OF EXAGGERATED PRESS STORIES CONNECTED TO TURKISH-GREEK DISPUTE IN AEGEAN. WITH EXCEPTION ONE MASS CIRCULATION DAILY, TURK PRESS DURING LAST TWO DAYS IS ALSO LESS STRIDENT ON SUBJECT. END SUMMARY.

1. DEFENSE MINISTER ISIK, IN AN APRIL 11 INTERVIEW WITH NEWS-PAPER MILLIYET, DENIED "FOREIGN" (READ "GREEK") PRESS REPORTS OF A MILITARY BUILD-UP IN EASTERN THRACE AND A GENERAL MOBILIZATION OF TURKE NAVAL AND GROUND FORCES. ISIK NOTED THAT A MILITARY EXERCISE HAD BEEN SCHEDULED AS A MATTER OF ROUTINE AND FOREIGN PRESS MIGHT HAVE MISINTERPRETED THESE UNEXCEPTIONAL MANEUVERS. (ACCORDING TO MILLIYET, A ROUTINE MILITARY EXERCISE IN WESTERN TURKEY IN FACT DID TAKE PLACE ON APRIL 10.) DEFMIN REITERATED HIS EARLIER STATEMENT THAT "TURKEY IS DETERMINED TO SOLVE ALL ITS PROBLEMS THROUGH NEGOTIATION AND AGREEMENT".

2. APRIL 10 EDITION OF HURRIYET, MEANWHILE, CITES RECENT LE MONDE INTERVIEW WITH PRIMIN ECEVIT IN WHICH PRIMIN REPORTEDLY SAID THAT AEGEAN DISPUTE SHOULD NOT BE TURNED INTO A FIELD OF CONFLICT BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY BUT SHOULD BE RESOLVED THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS.

ECEVIT, HOWEVER, WAS ALSO QUOTED AS STATING THAT TURKEY HAS A STRONG POSITION IN THE AEGEAN AND "THE RIGHT IS ON OUR SIDE, WE BELIEVE".

3. REGARDING REPORTED NATO INTEREST IN DISPUTE, MILLIYET ON APRIL 11 SAYS THAT SECGEN LUNS HAS DISCUSSED AEGEAN QUESTIONS WITH BOTH TURK AND GREEK PERMDELS. NATO OFFICIALS IN BRUSSELS ARE SAID TO BELIEVE MASS MEDIA IN BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE EXAGGERATED DISPUTE, AND MATTER NOT YET IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO BE CONSIDERED BY NATO COUNCIL.

4. WHILE EDITORIALS ON GREEK-TURK RELATIONS CONTINUE, FRONT PAGE COVERAGE HAS DECLINED SUBSTANTIALLY DURING PAST TWO DAYS. EXCEPTION IS MASS CIRCULATION HURRIYET, WHICH LED IN ANTI-GREEK AGITATION DURING CYPRUS CRISES AND CURRENTLY CARRIES DAILY SENSATIONAL STORIES ON GREECE. ITS APRIL 10 ISSUE, FOR INSTANCE, STATES THAT GREEK AND US SIXTH FLEET WARSHIPS ARE PATROLLING AEGEAN, WHILE GREECE IS MOVING TROOPS NORTH AND EAST AND IS EVACUATING VILLAGES ON TURKISH BORDER. HURRIYET ON APRIL 11 UNCLASSIFIED

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ALLEGES THAT GREECE HAS ALREADY RECEIVED SIX PHANTOMS, AND THAT NATO IS HELPING BUILD CONCRETE SHELTERS FOR THEM, THE SIXTH FLEET, WHICH HAS NOT RETURNED TO PIRAEUS, IS SUPPOSEDLY MONITORING TURKAND GREEK NAVIES WITH RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT. MACOMBER

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